

# City's New Office Of Sustainability

**I**n recent years, the Department of Planning & Development has spearheaded the first steps under the city's Sustainability Initiative. Planning & Development staff and resources have been central in launching programs such as CELEBRATE , which helps educate employees about their responsibilities to the environment, and a nonprofit organization, Green Chips, designed to improve the energy efficiency of the homes of our residents. The Sustainable Energy Strategy, a component of the Sustainability Initiative adopted by the City Council, has established ambitious targets for renewable energy and conservation. Due to the increasing complexity and scope of these projects, staff has been reorganized into a dedicated Office of Sustainability within the City Manager's Office of Administrative Services.

The new staffing plan will take advantage of Energy Efficiency Conservation Block Grant funds to offset approxi-

mately 24 percent of staffing costs in the near term. Additional savings are expected from focusing efforts on the CELEBRATE committee, which has saved the city thousands of dollars by

ing plan beyond the three-year period of the Energy Efficiency Conservation Block Grant.

In addition to CELEBRATE, current projects coordinated by this group include renewable energy installations, facility and street lighting retrofits, the city's Green Building Program, community partnerships with nonprofits HomeFree Nevada and Green Chips, and education and outreach in partnership with UNLV, with an overall program budget exceeding \$26 million. These projects under the Sustainable Energy Strategy are funded by a combination of federal grant and bond programs, the Green Building Special Revenue Fund, and community partner rebates and contributions.

Given the level of interaction with community leaders, inter-departmental coordination, complex capital projects and funding sources, and the many opportunities to bring funding to the city and save taxpayer dollars, the Sustainability Initiative will be given the kind – **Continued on Page 8**



From left to right: Lisa Spurgin, Paul Grimyser, Marco Velotta and Tom Perrigo, AICP.

examining and improving everyday procedures and procurements. The program will become self-sustaining using money generated from energy savings, the green building special revenue fund and grant opportunities to fund the proposed staff-

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# ACE Gold Line Arriving Soon At A Station Near You



The 18b Arts District station on Casino Center Boulevard.

**T**he new ACE Rapid Transit service will arrive downtown in early 2010. The ACE Gold Line will link downtown Las Vegas and Symphony Park with the Las Vegas Convention Center and the Strip. ACE rapid transit will feature many of the benefits of a light rail system but at a fraction of the cost. The system will feature sleek, rail-like vehicles that will operate in dedicated transit lanes on Casino Center Boulevard and Grand Central Parkway in downtown. The tran-

sit shelters will have a number of amenities that are unique to rapid transit and mimic light-rail service.

These include:

- Ticket vending machines that will allow passengers to pre-pay their fares;
- Level platform boarding that will allow passengers easy access to the ACE vehicles;
- 32-inch LCD screens that will feature helpful information for passengers;
- Technology that will let passengers know when to expect the next vehicle;
- Overhead canopies and screens that will provide passengers with shade; and
- Perch benches that will allow customers to relax while waiting for ACE.

A unique feature at each of the seven downtown stations will be one-of-a-kind artwork created by local artists and commissioned by the Regional

Transportation Commission (RTC). Each piece of artwork is unique and was created with the Mojave/Las Vegas environment in mind.

This new transportation system is designed to move large numbers of people in a rapid manner along some of the busiest transit routes in the Las Vegas Valley. The Gold Line is the first of several that will eventually connect most parts of the valley with the new downtown terminal. This terminal is currently under construction at the corner of Bonneville Avenue and Casino Center with an expected opening in late 2010. This state-of-the-art terminal was designed with a commitment to sustainability. It's expected to receive a Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) green building certification of Gold and will serve as a flagship facility for the RTC. For additional information visit [www.rtcnv.com](http://www.rtcnv.com). <sup>GW</sup>

## Richard Truesdell And Keen Ellsworth Elected As Chairman And Vice Chairman Of The City Of Las Vegas Planning Commission

**O**n Jan. 14, 2010, the city of Las Vegas Planning Commission elected Richard W. Truesdell to the position of chairman and Keen L. Ellsworth to the position of vice chairman. Mr. Truesdell is the mayor's appointee to the commission and Mr. Ellsworth was appointed by Councilman Steven D. Ross. <sup>GW</sup>

**Our Congratulations!**



Planning Commission Chairman, Richard W. Truesdell.



Planning Commission Vice Chairman, Keen Ellsworth.





# Recovery Act Update

**I**n October 2009, the city of Las Vegas was awarded its \$5.45 million allocation through the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant (EECBG) formula funds. This grant will fund several projects that will create jobs for southern Nevadans, reduce the city and community's electricity consumption, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and reduce the city's energy costs.

In the next few months, the city will begin construction on the first phase of its solar covered parking projects and streetlight upgrade project. Later in 2010, additional solar projects (i.e. covering city parking lots with solar panels) will be put out to bid leveraging New Clean Renewable Energy Bond funds. The city will use its allocation of Qualified Energy Conservation Bonds for later streetlight upgrade phases and to perform energy efficient retrofits to other city facilities. UNLV will also construct a Web site and GIS-based tool to provide real time tracking of energy generated and energy savings at city facilities.

This past year saw the launch of two city-endorsed nonprofit partners: HomeFree Nevada and Green Chips. HomeFree Nevada, the community's Home Performance with EnergySTAR program, initiated two pilot phases as part of the city's Green Building Program to provide rebates to city homeowners for energy audits. Green Chips also successfully began its broad-based community sustainability efforts, completing an energy audit at the Shade Tree Shelter and providing free energy audits and retrofits of low income homes in partnership with Rebuilding Together Southern Nevada. A revolving loan fund, which will provide loans to applicants that make energy efficient retrofits to their homes, is currently being set up through Green Chips using EECBG funds. A full launch of the HomeFree Nevada program using

EECBG funds is also in planning stages.

The city has continued to pursue other Recovery Act funding sources. In mid-December, the city of Las Vegas, Clark County, North Las Vegas and Henderson, collaboratively applied for approximately \$75 million in Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant funds under the Recovery Act in order to implement a block-by-block residential retrofit program. Under the Southern Nevada Retrofit Ramp-Up Program proposal, southern Nevada's local governments will work with Green Chips, HomeFree Nevada and a variety of other public, private, and nonprofit partners, to audit and retrofit 30,000 homes over three years. The Department of Energy will make awards in March and release funds to awardees in May.

For more information on Sustaining Las Vegas, go to [www.LasVegasNevada.gov/SustainingLasVegas](http://www.LasVegasNevada.gov/SustainingLasVegas). <sup>GW</sup>



*The Stupak Community Center is located at 300 W. Boston Ave., just west of the Stratosphere.*

In the next few months, the city will begin construction on the first phase of its solar covered parking projects and streetlight upgrade project.



## Regional Sustainability Planning Conference – Washington DC

By Flinn Fagg, AICP, Acting Deputy Director

**I**n October 2009, I attended a regional sustainability conference in Washington, D.C., hosted jointly by Transportation For America and American Planning Association (APA). Featured speakers at the conference included Christopher Leinberger of the Brookings Institute, Peter Calthorpe of Calthorpe and Associates and James Corless, director of Transportation For America (T4 America). There was also a panel presentation where representatives from Sacramento, Salt Lake City and Minneapolis spoke about their efforts in planning regional transportation systems as a way to direct growth and reduce environmental impacts.

In line with the theme of the conference, I am proud to report that I was able to use the Metro system exclusively for all of my travel in the D.C. area. All destinations, including my hotel, were within a block or two of a Metro station, and I sadly missed that convenience when I arrived back home in Las Vegas.

While in Washington, I was able to schedule a meeting with Linda Lawson, Director of the Office of the Environment with the U.S. Department of Transportation. In our meeting, we discussed the Partnership for Sustainable Communities, in which DOT, HUD and the EPA will join together to better coordinate sustainable development. I also discussed our Walkable Community plans, in an effort to promote our efforts to encourage walking and alternative forms of transportation in Las Vegas through land use and infrastructure modifications.

In between the conference and meetings, I was able to drop by the Solar

Decathlon exhibit, in which 20 college teams from the U.S. and abroad had constructed zero-energy homes on the National Mall. In addition to competing for energy efficiency, the demonstration homes also showcased the latest in renewable energy products and sustainable materials.

The highlight of the trip was attending the America's Byways Designations event, in which Las Vegas Boulevard received its National Scenic Byway designation. Due to the efforts of Yorgo Kagafas, AICP, urban design coordinator, in preparing the application, Las Vegas Boulevard is now one of a limited number of urban thoroughfares to receive the national designation. *GW*



Team Ontario



Team Missouri

## 2009 National Preservation Conference, Music City, USA

By Courtney Mooney, AICP, Urban Design Coordinator

**I**n October, I attended the 2009 National Preservation Conference, sponsored by the National Trust for Historic Preservation (NTHP), in Nashville, Ten-



Ryman Auditorium

nessee. The theme of the conference, "Sustaining the Future in Harmony with our Pasts," was appropriate for its setting in Music City.

The opening plenary session was held at the Ryman Auditorium, a National Historic Landmark built in 1891 as the Union Gospel Tabernacle, and home to the Grand Ole Opry from 1943 to 1974. Opening remarks focused on the link between historic preservation and sustainability, and the need to improve education, research methods and partnerships regarding this issue.

The NTHP has been working with the U.S. Green Building Council on better integrating historic and existing buildings into the LEED, Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design Building Rating Systems. As a result, LEED 2009 includes revisions to the point distribution system that encourage building renovation, consider cultural impacts and the life cycle and embodied energy of historic materials and assemblies. In addition, LEED, for Neighborhood Development (LEED-ND) integrates historic preservation with the principles of smart growth, new urbanism and healthy neighborhood design.

Following these principles, Nashville is phasing out their land use policies document in favor of a more form-based code with urban design overlay districts. As I walked to some of the districts, I experienced first-hand a lesson in urban planning; if you build it, you'd better provide a way for people to come to it. Inadequate bus service and pedestrian routes hindered

– Continued on Page 5





### 2009 National Preservation Conference – Continued From Page 4

access to showcase developments, and isolated districts seemed to have little contextual or physical connection to their surroundings.

As I rested my feet at yet another barbecue joint and considered regional differences in sauces, I reflected on how simple the recipe is for a sustainable city, yet how completely dependent the ingredients are on each other and, and how the order in which they are mixed is integral to a successful outcome. Another nickname for Nashville is “Nashvegas.” I tell myself it’s for the great neon on Broadway, and not for any other reason. <sup>GW</sup>

## Sustainable Zoning And Development Controls Conference – San Francisco

By Flinn Fagg, AICP, Acting Deputy Director

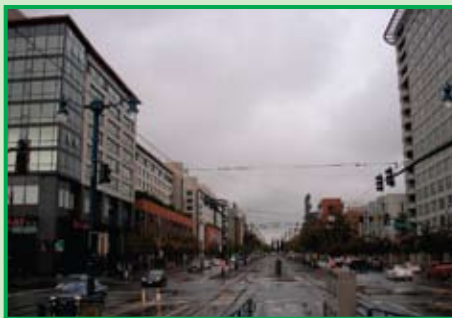
**I**n November, I traveled to the transit-friendly city of San Francisco, Calif. to attend the Sustainable Zoning and Development Controls Conference, hosted by APA. Sessions at the conference addressed legal issues in regulating sustainability measures, renewable energy coding, sustainable community development codes, urban farming and housing affordability issues. Speakers included Christopher Duerksen and Craig Richardson from Clarion Associates, and James Duncan, a past president of APA.

John Rahaim, Director of Planning for the city of San Francisco, was a featured speaker at the conference, and discussed efforts that the city has taken to implement sustainability measures. Beginning with the “Transit First” policy adoption in 1973 and continuing through building code amendments in 2008 that require L.E.E.D. certification, the city has made significant efforts to encourage transit-

related development and sustainable construction practices.

The day after the conference, a local planner took me on a tour of the T Line, a new light rail line added to the Muni transit system in 2007. The line was constructed within an existing street right-of-way, and has assisted in the redevelopment of the Mission Bay area, and served as a focus for several new affordable housing developments.

As with my trip to Washington, D.C., I was completely transit-centric in traveling around San Francisco: BART got me to and from the airport, the MUNI rail system was used for trips up and down Market Street, the bus system took me out to the North Beach neighborhood and the Mission District, and I used the streetcar line up and down the Embarcadero. <sup>GW</sup>



MUNI T-Line in the Third Street corridor (before and after).



Affordable housing development recently constructed next to the T-Line.

## Joint SNRPC Coalition Board And Technical Committee Workshop – Jan. 21, 2010

**M**embers of the Southern Nevada Regional Planning Coalition (SNRPC) gathered on January 21st to discuss the mission of the organization. Conditions in southern Nevada have changed dramatically since the regional policy plan was adopted in 2001, and the coalition board had requested a workshop to reassess the focus and future direction of the coalition and to provide strategic planning for the overall organization.

The joint workshop, which included both the SNRPC Coalition Board and technical committee, was facilitated by Irene Navis from Clark County, Dale Erquiaga from Clark County School District, and Candace Somers from the city of Henderson. The facilitators had interviewed members of the technical committee and coalition board prior to the workshop as a means for directing the discussion.

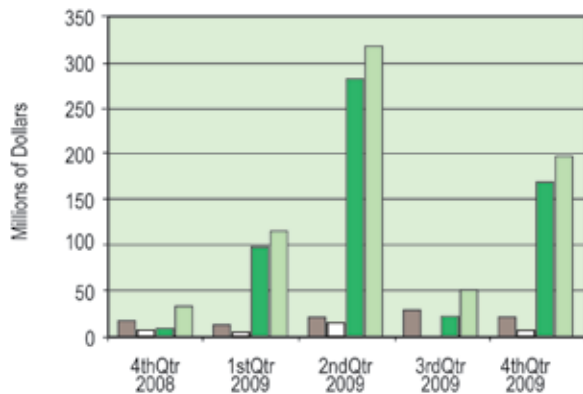
One issue noted at the workshop was that the role of the SNRPC has broadened to include homelessness, youth issues and economic development, all of which are outside the scope of the adopted Southern Nevada Regional Policy Plan. This was attributed to the fact that the SNRPC is the only venue where general regional topics can be discussed among the entities. Other discussion topics included consolidation of services and consistency of regulatory requirements amongst the entities.

The facilitators will provide a final written report on the workshop in February, detailing the list of priorities and direction received from the coalition board and technical committee members. This report will serve as a basis for amendments to the regional policy plan and direct priorities for the SNRPC work plan. <sup>GW</sup>



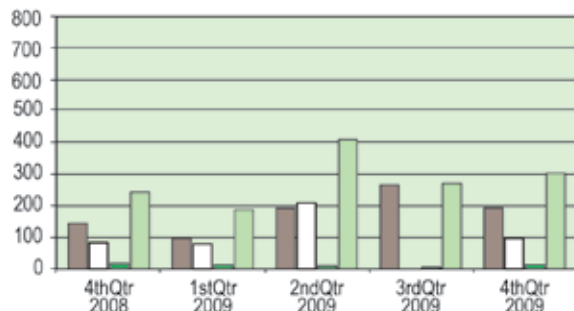
Single Family
  Multi-Family
  Commercial
  Total

**New Permit Valuation**



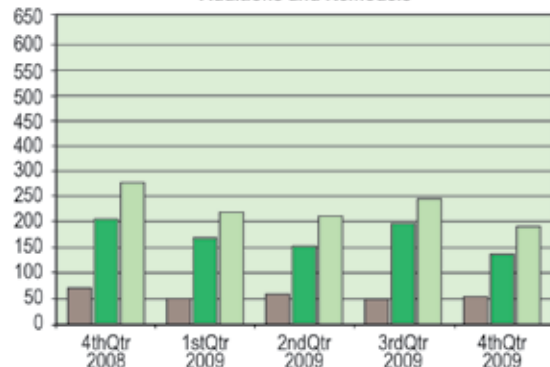
New Permit Valuation				
	Single Family	Multi-Family	Commercial	Total
4th Qtr-2008	\$ 17,369,185	\$ 6,854,290	\$ 8,807,278	\$ 33,030,753
1st Qtr-2009	\$ 12,689,423	\$ 4,723,363	\$ 97,820,440	\$115,233,226
2nd Qtr-2009	\$ 20,968,528	\$ 14,980,824	\$281,307,807	\$317,257,159
3rd Qtr-2009	\$ 28,927,622	\$ -	\$ 21,971,855	\$ 50,899,477
4th Qtr-2009	\$ 21,236,627	\$ 6,783,239	\$168,815,538	\$196,835,404
% Chg Last Qtr	-26.6	100.0	668.3	286.7
% Chg Last Year	22.3	-1.0	1816.8	495.9

**New Building Permits**



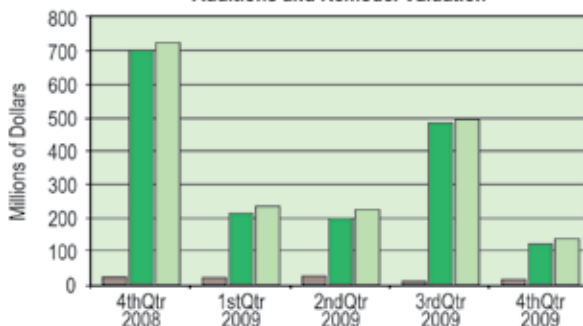
New Building Permits				
	Single Family	Multi-Family	Commercial	Total
4th Qtr-2008	143	82	16	241
1st Qtr-2009	96	78	12	186
2nd Qtr-2009	191	207	9	407
3rd Qtr-2009	264	-	5	269
4th Qtr-2009	192	96	13	301
% Chg Last Qtr	-27.3	0.0	160.0	11.9
% Chg Last Year	34.3	17.1	-18.8	24.9

**Additions and Remodels**



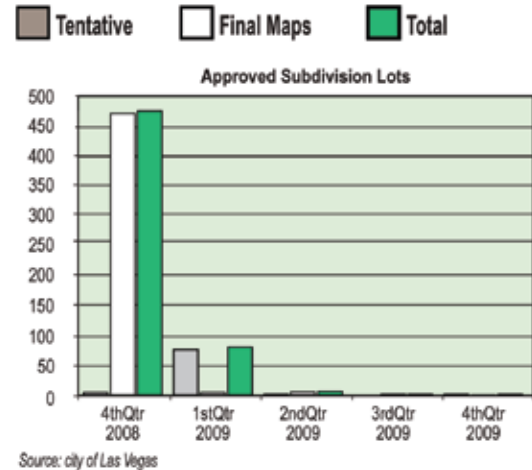
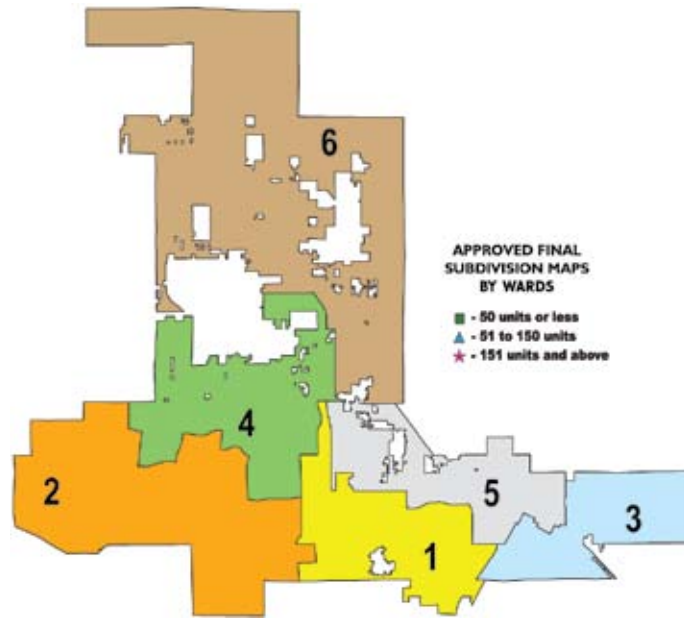
Additions and Remodels			
	Single Family	Commercial	Total
4th Qtr-2008	71	206	277
1st Qtr-2009	50	169	219
2nd Qtr-2009	59	153	212
3rd Qtr-2009	49	197	246
4th Qtr-2009	54	137	191
% Chg Last Qtr	10.2	-30.5	-22.4
% Chg Last Year	-23.9	-33.5	-31.0

**Additions and Remodel Valuation**



Additions and Remodel Valuation			
	Single Family	Commercial	Total
4th Qtr-2008	\$ 2,235,143	\$ 70,316,940	\$ 72,552,083
1st Qtr-2009	\$ 2,083,187	\$ 21,406,131	\$ 23,489,318
2nd Qtr-2009	\$ 2,543,401	\$ 19,919,574	\$ 22,462,975
3rd Qtr-2009	\$ 966,819	\$ 48,545,012	\$ 49,511,831
4th Qtr-2009	\$ 1,575,203	\$ 12,225,763	\$ 13,800,966
% Chg Last Qtr	62.9	-74.8	-72.1
% Chg Last Year	-29.5	-82.6	-81.0

Source: city of Las Vegas (including subdivision information)



### Leading Economic Indicators For Clark County

"The Southern Nevada Index of Leading Economic Indicators, a signal of job growth four to six months in the future, declined in December by 0.61 percent. Eight of the ten indicators show declines from the same month a year ago. The two indicators that did show positive year-over-year growth contributed little to the index after weighting and seasonal adjustment. Gross gaming revenue, the most heavily weighted series in the index, caused the largest drag on the index. Improved performance in the gaming sector will be a key component to future Clark County job growth."

Source: UNLV Center for Business and Economic Research, December 2009

Approved Subdivision Lots			
	Tentative Maps	Final Maps	Total
4th Qtr-2008	4	471	475
1st Qtr-2009	76	4	80
2nd Qtr-2009	1	5	6
3rd Qtr-2009	-	1	1
4th Qtr-2009	1	-	1
% Chg Last Qtr	0.0	-100.0	0.0
% Chg Last Year	-75.0	-100.0	-99.8

**Editors note:** In order to update the community on the city's Sustainability Initiative, *Green Watch* and *Growth Watch* alternate on a quarterly basis.

Leading Economic Indicators						
CLARK COUNTY SERIES	DATE	UNITS	LATEST PERIOD	CHANGE PREVIOUS PERIOD	CHANGE YEAR AGO	CONTRIBUTION TO INDEX *
RESIDENTIAL BUILDING						
Units Permitted	Oct-09	#Units Permitted	485	16.03%	-46.70%	-0.032%
Permit Valuation	Oct-09	Dollars	\$ 48,705,127	-0.67%	-36.43%	-0.029%
COMMERCIAL BUILDING						
Permits	Oct-09	#Units Permitted	20	5.26%	-63.64%	-0.040%
Permit Valuation	Oct-09	Dollars	\$ 49,457,890	390.51%	37.76%	0.003%
TAXABLE SALES	Oct-09	Dollars	\$ 2,249,382,533	-4.09%	-18.96%	0.081%
McCARRAN AIRPORT	Oct-09	Passengers Enplaned/Deplaned	3,513,663	5.33%	-1.32%	-0.046%
GALLONS OF GASOLINE	Oct-09	Thousands of Gallons	62,907,279	0.40%	-2.97%	-0.057%
GROSS GAMING REVENUE	Oct-09	Dollars	\$ 673,403,952	-13.00%	-11.10%	-0.353%
CONVENTIONS HELD						
Visitor Volume	Oct-09	People	3,153,159	2.97%	3.75%	0.017%
Attendance	Oct-09	People	349,383	-12.94%	-8.33%	0.006%
OVERALL CHANGE IN LEADING INDICATOR **	Dec-09		125.12	-0.61%	-2.85%	-0.61%

Source: UNLV Center for Business and Economic Research

\* The contribution to the index is a net-weighted average of each series after adjustment for seasonal variation.

\*\* The index is a six-month forecast (April 1, 2010) from the month of the data (October 1, 2009) and four months from the month of the series (December 1, 2009).





# Upper Las Vegas Wash Gains Support For Status

By Dr. Kevin Rafferty, President Archaeo-Nevada Society

**O**n Nov. 18, 2009, the Las Vegas City Council approved a resolution supporting the designation of an area known as the Upper Las Vegas Wash as an Urban National Park Unit managed by the National Park Service.

The Upper Las Vegas Wash region contains a wealth of information that is important to understanding both the paleontological and archaeological history of southern Nevada and the Mojave Desert. Research conducted both in the 1960s and in the last few years have confirmed that Upper Las Vegas Wash contains unique and irreplaceable concentrations of fossils of the Pleistocene Age that would provide invaluable insights into issues such as long-term environmental change and faunal extinctions. Concurrent archaeological research indicates that Native American populations have lived in and exploited the resources of the area in question for at least the last 13,000 years, making the Upper Las Vegas Wash an important natural laboratory to examine and understand the prehistory and history of southern Nevada.

As the Las Vegas metropolitan area has expanded, the Upper Las Vegas wash with its trove of scientific data has not been consistently well managed and has suffered damage. Therefore, the Las Vegas City Council and the Paiute Tribal Council, along with North Las Vegas and Clark County, on Nov. 17 and 18, 2009, adopted resolutions in support of designating the Upper Las Vegas Wash as an Urban National Park Unit to be managed by the National Park Service. <sup>GW</sup>

## CITY'S NEW OFFICE OF SUSTAINABILITY – Continued From Page 1

of organizational presence and focus found in Administrative Services with direct reporting to the city manager much like the Office of Communications and Department of Finance. This reorganization will more closely align sustainability staff with services provided by Administrative Services. In addition to the Sustainability Initiative duties, this group will provide analytical and research support to the city manager as directed by Administrative Services management.

By strategically realigning the Sustainability Initiative into the Office of Administrative Services and making necessary staff adjustments, the city has more opportunity to expand upon current successes and heighten the awareness of this important program within the organization. In addition, the transition will allow the city manager and City Council a direct link for providing input and direction to the programs contemplated as the initiative expands. Finally, the realignment will provide needed resources to programs and services that are designed to raise awareness, save money, increase efficiency and improve the overall quality of life for current and future generations of city residents. <sup>GW</sup>

## RESOURCES

**Planning & Development Department:**  
[www.lasvegasnevada.gov/Planning](http://www.lasvegasnevada.gov/Planning)

**Development Services Center:**  
[www.lasvegasnevada.gov/DSC](http://www.lasvegasnevada.gov/DSC)

**Historic Preservation:**  
[www.lasvegasnevada.gov/HPC](http://www.lasvegasnevada.gov/HPC)

**Maps:**  
[www.lasvegasnevada.gov/maps](http://www.lasvegasnevada.gov/maps)

**Sustaining Las Vegas:**  
[www.lasvegasnevada.gov/sustaininglasvegas](http://www.lasvegasnevada.gov/sustaininglasvegas)

## Las Vegas GREEN WATCH

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Councilman Steve Wolfson, Ward 2  
Councilwoman Lois Tarkanian, Ward 1  
Councilman Steven D. Ross, Ward 6  
Councilman Ricki Y. Barlow, Ward 5  
Councilman Stavros S. Anthony, Ward 4

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### Chief Urban Redevelopment Officer

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Deputy Director Tom Perrigo, AICP

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